

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for managing a plurality of attributes in association with a plurality of electronic documents, implemented by a computer system, said method comprising the at least one of sequential, non-sequential and sequence-independent steps of:
  - (A) providing at least one attribute type, having a plurality of attributes including at least one attribute;
  - (B) providing at least one document;
  - (C) associating the at least one document with the at least one attribute, and determining at least one reference corresponding to the at least one document;
  - (D) associating at least one other document with the at least one attribute and determining at least one other reference corresponding to the at least one other document; and
  - (E) storing the at least one reference and the at least one other reference in association with the at least one attribute, for later retrieval of the at least one document and the at least one other document.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising determining at least one group of documents responsive to a user, the group including the at least one document and the at least one other document.
3. The method of claim 2, further comprising the step of organizing the group of documents, wherein the documents are organized by at least one of: at least one field therein, and at least one attribute previously associated therewith.
4. The method of claim 2, wherein the group of documents omits a lapsed document.
5. The method of claim 2, further comprising the step of assigning the at least one document to at least one other group.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one document is at least one of: XML format, binary format, image data, audio data, an interpretive file, and video data.
7. The method of claim 1, further comprising searching for the at least one document based on criteria including at least one of the at least one attribute and the at least one attribute type.
8. The method of claim 7, further comprising accessing the at least one document from the at least one attribute and the at least one reference stored in association therewith.
9. The method of claim 8, further comprising displaying information characterizing the at least one document.
10. The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one attribute is associated with at least one user, the at least one document being accessible by a plurality of users including the at least one user, further comprising limiting access to the at least one attribute to the at least one user associated therewith.
11. The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one attribute further includes at least one of: a reference to a URL, a reference to an other file, and user-provided text.
12. The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one document and the at least one other document are representative of at least one of: an invention disclosure document, a patent document, a trademark document, a copyright document, a product description document, a contract document, a license document, a sui generis protection document, a design registration document, a trade secret document, and an opinion document.
13. The method of claim 1, further comprising preliminarily determining, for the at least one attribute type, the plurality of attributes including the at least one attribute.

14. The method of claim 1, further comprising storing the at least one document and the at least one other document for later retrieval.
15. The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one attribute is selected from a plurality of attribute types representative of at least one of: a product and a service.
16. The method of claim 15, wherein the plurality of attribute types further includes at least one of: an actor, a user entity, a current owner, and a project.
17. The method of claim 1, further comprising at least one sub-attribute type associated with the at least one attribute type, and wherein the at least one sub-attribute type has a second plurality of attributes including at least one second attribute associated with the at least one attribute, wherein the at least one attribute type inherits the at least one attribute responsive to an association of the at least one second attribute with the at least one document.
18. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of exporting the at least one attribute and the plurality of attribute types.
19. The method of claim 1, further comprising utilizing the at least one attribute as criteria for at least one of searching, retrieving, reporting, and viewing the at least one document.
20. The method of claim 19, wherein the at least one attribute is utilized in combination with at least one of: (i) the at least one attribute type, (ii) at least one sub-type of the at least one attribute type, (iii) a content of at least one field in the at least one document; (iv) a type of at least one field in the at least one document; and (vi) information derived from the at least one field in the at least one document.

21. The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one reference corresponds to the serial number of the at least one document.

22. A method for managing a plurality of attributes in association with a plurality of electronic documents, implemented by a computer system, said method comprising the at least one of sequential, non-sequential and sequence-independent steps of:

(A) providing at least one attribute type, having a plurality of attributes including at least one attribute;

(B) providing at least one document;

(C) associating the at least one document with the at least one attribute, and determining at least one reference corresponding to the at least one document;

(D) associating at least one other document with the at least one attribute and determining at least one other reference corresponding to the at least one other document; and

(E) storing the at least one reference and the at least one other reference in association with the at least one attribute, for later retrieval of at least one of the at least one document and the at least one other document;

(F) wherein the at least one document and the at least one other document are representative of at least one of: an invention disclosure document, a patent document, a trademark document, a copyright document, a product description document, a contract document, a license document, a sui generis protection document, a design registration document, a trade secret document, and an opinion document.

23. The method of claim 22, further comprising determining at least one group of documents responsive to a user, the group including the at least one document, wherein the group of documents omits a lapsed document.
24. The method of claim 22, further comprising searching for the at least one document based on criteria including at least one of the at least one attribute and the at least one attribute type.
25. The method of claim 22, wherein the at least one attribute is selected from a plurality of attribute types representative of at least one of: a product and a service.
26. The method of claim 22, further comprising at least one sub-attribute type associated with the at least one attribute type, and wherein the at least one sub-attribute type has a second plurality of attributes including at least one second attribute associated with the at least one attribute, wherein the at least one attribute type inherits the at least one attribute responsive to an association of the at least one second attribute with the at least one document.
27. The method of claim 22, further comprising utilizing the at least one attribute as criteria for at least one of searching, retrieving, reporting, and viewing the at least one document.
28. The method of claim 27, wherein the at least one attribute is utilized in combination with at least one of: (i) the at least one attribute type, (ii) at least one sub-type of the at least one attribute type, (iii) a content of at least one field in the at least one document; (iv) a type of at least one field in the at least one document; and (vi) information derived from the at least one field in the at least one document.

29. The method of claim 22, wherein the at least one reference corresponds to the serial number of the at least one document.

30. A computer program product, for use in managing a plurality of attributes in association with a plurality of electronic documents stored in connection with at least one computer system, said computer program product comprising:

(A) at least one computer readable medium, readable by the at least one computer system;

(B) instructions, provided on the at least one computer readable medium, for providing at least one attribute type, having a plurality of attributes including at least one attribute;

(C) instructions, provided on the at least one computer readable medium, for providing at least one document;

(D) instructions, provided on the at least one computer readable medium, for associating the at least one document with the at least one attribute, and determining at least one reference corresponding to the at least one document;

(E) instructions, provided on the at least one computer readable medium, for associating at least one other document with the at least one attribute and determining at least one other reference corresponding to the at least one other document; and

(F) instructions, provided on the at least one computer readable medium, for storing the at least one reference and the at least one other reference in association with the at least one attribute, for later retrieval of at least one of the at least one document and the at least one other document;

(G) wherein the at least one document and the at least one other document are representative of at least one of: an invention disclosure document, a patent document, a trademark document, a copyright document, a product description document, a contract document, a license document, a sui generis protection document, a design registration document, a trade secret document, and an opinion document.

31. The computer program product of claim 30, further comprising instructions, provided on the at least one computer readable medium, for determining at least one group of documents responsive to a user, the group including the at least one document, wherein the group of documents omits a lapsed document.

32. The computer program product of claim 30, further comprising instructions, provided on the at least one computer readable medium, for searching for the at least one document based on criteria including at least one of the at least one attribute and the at least one attribute type.

33. The computer program product of claim 30, wherein the at least one attribute is selected from a plurality of attribute types representative of at least one of: a product and a service.

34. The computer program product of claim 30, further comprising instructions, provided on the at least one computer readable medium, for associating at least one sub-attribute type with the at least one attribute type, and wherein the at least one sub-attribute type has a second plurality of attributes including at least one second attribute associated with the at least one attribute, and instructions, provided on the at least one computer readable medium, for the at least one attribute type inheriting the at least one

attribute responsive to an association of the at least one second attribute with the at least one document.

35. The computer program product of claim 30, further comprising instructions, provided on the at least one computer readable medium, for utilizing the at least one attribute as criteria for at least one of searching, retrieving, reporting, and viewing the at least one document.

36. The computer program product of claim 35, wherein the at least one attribute is utilized in combination with at least one of: (i) the at least one attribute type, (ii) at least one sub-type of the at least one attribute type, (iii) a content of at least one field in the at least one document; (iv) a type of at least one field in the at least one document; and (vi) information derived from the at least one field in the at least one document.

37. The computer program product of claim 30, wherein the at least one reference corresponds to the serial number of the at least one document.

38. A system, implemented on at least one computer, for managing a plurality of attributes in association with a plurality of electronic documents, said system comprising:

(A) means, in the at least one computer, for providing at least one attribute type, having a plurality of attributes including at least one attribute;

(B) means, in the at least one computer, for providing at least one document;

(C) means, in the at least one computer, for associating the at least one document with the at least one attribute, and determining at least one reference corresponding to the at least one document;



(D) means, in the at least one computer, for associating at least one other document with the at least one attribute and determining at least one other reference corresponding to the at least one other document; and

(E) means, in the at least one computer, for storing the at least one reference and the at least one other reference in association with the at least one attribute, for later retrieval of at least one of the at least one document and the at least one other document;

(F) wherein the at least one document and the at least one other document are representative of at least one of: an invention disclosure document, a patent document, a trademark document, a copyright document, a product description document, a contract document, a license document, a sui generis protection document, a design registration document, a trade secret document, and an opinion document.

39. The system of claim 38, further comprising means, in the at least one computer, for determining at least one group of documents responsive to a user, the group including the at least one document, wherein the group of documents omits a lapsed document.

40. The system of claim 38, further comprising means, in the at least one computer, for searching for the at least one document based on criteria including at least one of the at least one attribute and the at least one attribute type.

41. The system of claim 38, wherein the at least one attribute is selected from a plurality of attribute types representative of at least one of: a product and a service.

42. The system of claim 38, further comprising at least one sub-attribute type associated with the at least one attribute type, and wherein the at least one sub-attribute type has a second plurality of attributes including at least one second attribute associated with the at least one attribute, wherein the at least one attribute type inherits the at least

one attribute responsive to an association of the at least one second attribute with the at least one document.

43. The system of claim 38, further comprising utilizing the at least one attribute as criteria for at least one of searching, retrieving, reporting, and viewing the at least one document.

44. The method of claim 43, wherein the at least one attribute is utilized in combination with at least one of: (i) the at least one attribute type, (ii) at least one sub-type of the at least one attribute type, (iii) a content of at least one field in the at least one document; (iv) a type of at least one field in the at least one document; and (vi) information derived from the at least one field in the at least one document.

45. The system of claim 38, wherein the at least one reference corresponds to the serial number of the at least one document.